

STRUGGLING Ilford produced an amazing turnaround in the second half of Saturday's Isthmian League encounter. A goal down after 45 minutes, they came back to completely dominate the second half and clinch the points with two goals from big John Gormley.

It meant Wycombe's fourth defeat of the season and more headaches for manager Brian Lee. Wanderers are now sixth in the table — no less than seven points behind Hendon — their lowest position for three seasons.

But even Wycombe must have admired the spirit of the Ilford side. Running on a low budget this season with hopes of a brand new clubhouse in the near future, they took full advantage of the bone hard conditions and fought like demons.

The turning point came from midfield. As Hutchinson and Pritchard tired, so Cerasoli, Row and Bookman grew from strength to strength and throughout the second half they dictated play completely.

It was probably the most continual pressure Wycombe have met this term and they had no answer to it. They became more and more frustrated as time wore on and an equaliser never really looked on the cards.

Some baffling decisions by referee C. Downey upset both sides. Not that Wycombe were quibbling about the first goal, Larry Pritchard seemingly well off side with the linesman's flag raised high. The referee chose to ignore his decision. In the second half, Gerry Olson was booked for a minor foul on Terry Howard.

It was Howard, in fact, who gave John Maskell his worst moment in the first half after only three minutes, John pushing his lob over the top for a corner. But with Searle and Horseman combining well, it was not long before the Blues retaliated.

pressure. Gerry Olson had one back-header cleared off the line by Jeff Bookman after a Hutchinson corner and Searle also went close.

At this stage the Blues defence looked completely in command. Olson and Delaney were virtually unchallenged

protests, Olson's name went into the book.

A minute later Ilford equalised. Great running by Cerasoli set up the goal, Gormley putting in a spectacular overhead kick wide of Maskell from Cerasoli's measured cross.

The goal injected new life into the home side who began challenging for everything. Delaney and Olson could not contain Gormley and Rowe in the air and Wycombe were so busy defending they had nothing to offer the front runners except hurried clearances.

Just on 75 minutes, Ilford deservedly took the lead. Paul Birdseye gave away a free kick and Dave Guiver's floated cross was met first time by the head of Gormley who outjumped Olson and sent the ball crisply past Maskell.

Understandably, there was no stopping Gormley after that. Whereas in the first half he was played out of the game by Wycombe's centre backs, he was now leaping those extra few inches, and laying the ball off perfectly for his forwards.

With Wanderers growing more and more frustrated Ilford came within an ace of making it 3-1 in the dying seconds. Cerasoli's shot was blocked on the line and ball came out to Collins who sent a crashing drive against an upright.

Few would have denied another goal for Ilford. They were prepared to work for their success and Wycombe could never match their enthusiasm.

ILFORD: P. James, D. Collins, D. Guiver, M. Jones, G. Ferguson, J. Bookman, J. Cerasoli, J. Rowe, J. Gormley, T. Howard, J. Burton, sub M. Keane (not used).

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: J. Maskell, P. Birdseye, D. Gamblin, G. Olson, J. Delaney, R. Williams, M. Holifield, L. Pritchard, K. Searle, A. Horseman, J. Hutchinson, sub I. Rundle (not used).

Half-time 0-1.

Referee, C. Downey.

Goalscorers: Wycombe - Pritchard (15), Ilford - Gormley 2 (56, 75).

Ilford 2, Wycombe Wanderers 1 Report by STUART EARP

Pritchard found room enough for a shot which 'keeper Paul James covered well. He was beaten a minute later by Mick Holifield's speed, but full-back Dave Collins cleared his shot off the line.

Then after 15 minutes Wycombe took a hotly disputed lead.

Put through by Horseman, Pritchard half stopped as the defence stood arms raised appealing for off side but Larry made no mistake with his shot, placing the ball well wide of James, into the corner. Led by Howard, several Ilford players protested in vain to the referee, who without consulting his linesman, allowed the goal to stand.

The decision clearly upset the home side who were then subjected to concerted Wycombe

throughout the half while Maskell was never worried by the occasional long range 'hopeful' from Ilford.

In attack, too, Wanderers looked a class above the opposition. Searle and Horseman were laying balls off neatly while Derek Gamblin's clever running off the ball and use of the touchline, caused numerous problems.

So, after 45 minutes, things looked rosy for Wanderers. There was nothing to suggest they shouldn't add another goal and cruise in comfortably for both points.

Yet the ten minutes after the interval always seems to spell danger for Wycombe. It happened at Tooting in the Cup and the early warning lights were there again on Saturday.

In only the 46th minute a shot from Johnny Burton hit Maskell's legs after Gamblin had misjudged Bookman's pass, the ball bouncing high over his head. Wycombe were caught again by Gormley's clever lob, which Cerasoli hammered over the top when faced only by the 'keeper.

In the space of seven minutes, Ilford had created more worry in the second half than they had in the whole of the first

Olson's booking after 55 minutes did little to steady the visitors. The big centre-back appeared to stumble when challenging Howard, who went tumbling. Despite Howard's